

Budget and Administration

Fiscal Year 1999 Annual Report Region 3



Program Description and Mission

The Budget and Administration team is composed of the functional areas of Engineering and Safety, Personnel Management, Computer Support, Budget and Finance, Contracting and General Services and Youth Training and Education (Mingo Job Corps).

The mission of the teams's subcomponents are:

Engineering and Safety. Provide quality and timely engineering services and maintain a motivated staff through training and use of up-to-date available technology. Provide pro active safety support for the Region, with timely guidance and oversight of Regional safety practices.

Personnel. To provide quality customer-focused technical and consultant services in the areas of human resource management and development that support the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service mission in compliance with the Merit System Principles.

Computer Support Group. Provide quality customer service to Region 3 computer users by supporting and enhancing existing systems, and researching and planning transitions to new automated systems and technologies.

Finance. Provide informed guidance and instruction on the wide variety of finance and budget related rules, regulations, procedures and programs while maintaining and improving working relationships with field and Regional Office employees.

Contracting and General Services. Provide professional, high quality services to the Regional Office and field stations congruent with the mission of the Service, and contribute to its fulfillment through a motivated, well trained staff using up-to-date technologies and methods.

Mingo Job Corps. Establish and maintain a safe, positive instructional environment which encourages the educational, vocational, and social growth and development of Mingo students and staff.

Division personnel participated on a national team to develop service wide accessibility standards for outdoor recreation activities and facilities, and was involved in developing an Internet data base to track, monitor, and report on accessibility compliance of Service facilities. The Division of Engineering is continuing to improve customer service by conducting regular status meetings with Refuge and Fisheries personnel. In addition, the Division completed plans and specifications for 46 construction and maintenance projects with an estimated value of \$4.5 million.

Summary of Fiscal Year 1999 Accomplishments

Engineering and Safety

The Safety component coordinated and conducted five defensive driving classes for personnel from the Regional Office and Minnesota Valley NWR; assisted with the organization of five watercraft safety training sessions, training over 90 Service employees; coordinated and conducted training sessions on explosives, and wildlife netting; and established Regional policy on lyme disease vaccinations. Throughout the year Safety tracks, monitors and assists with station safety inspections, and accident reporting. Safety also has examined a number of tort claims and assisted the Solicitor's Office on these cases.

Personnel

Employees of the Division worked on preparation of more standard position descriptions (SPD's) in concert with client needs, and lead a national effort for a nation-wide SPD project. Also they worked on the addition of more information to the Web-site to aid field stations to be more self-sufficient as far as obtaining information and forms relative to Personnel, especially relative to entry on board of new employees. In the Employee Relations arena employees worked on a course on Merit Systems Principles that was designed and provided at multiple location to supervisory/management employees. Employees also updated their desk manuals to reflect new automated systems. Finally an analysis was conducted of the Region 3 Awards program with recommendations for improvement to adhere to existing regulations and requirements.

Computer Support Group

Staff of the Computer Support Group worked very hard this year to prepare the Region for the Year 2000. A coordinated effort was conducted to ensure that all computers and software are Y2K compliant. A consolidated order for WordPerfect 8 was submitted and the software distributed. cc:Mobile upgrades and cc:Mail Post Office upgrades were done throughout the Region to ensure Y2K compliance. The Computer Support Group revamped the entire Regional Office network by consolidating 5 Novell 3.12 servers to 1 Novell 4.11 server (with a standby second server) and an external disk array. The wiring topology for the office was updated to fast ethernet and a complete renovation of the Regional Office Computer Room was done. The result of this hard work is a stable and efficient local area network. Employees of the Computer Support Group worked to install wide area network connections to St. Paul LE and Sherburne NWR and plan for additional WAN connections for Fiscal Year 2000. The Computer Support Group designed and implemented their own web site as a means to keep computer users informed with important information. Finally, employees have expended a great deal of time and effort planning and preparing for the Region's email conversion to Lotus Notes. The Regional Office has been converted and an aggressive plan to convert field office networks has begun.

Finance Employees prepared and distributed information on new procedures, reports, etc. for FFS, RDE, Credit Cards, Imprest Funds, TDY travel, PCS travel and other programs coordinated by the Budget and Finance Office. Additionally, the Finance Division coordinated the transfer from American Express and Visa Credit Cards to the MasterCard used by all employees for travel and/or purchasing, the reduction of all Imprest Funds in the Region, and the transfer of all Regional stations and offices to new contract travel agents.

Contracting and General Services The Division of Contracting and General Services continued to emphasize partnership with other government entities, non-profit organizations and the business community. It issued 220 new cooperative agreements and modified another 125 at a total value of \$5, 000,000. One particular accomplishment was the agreement with the City of Hamilton Ohio, Hamilton Park Board for the restoration of Fish Creek.

The Division began to utilize the Interior Department Electronic Acquisition Systems for all acquisitions except commercial credit card buys, and increased our use of the Internet to locate potential vendors. They managed a program obligating more than \$20,000,000 dollars in new procurement in fiscal year 1999 with a large proportion of those expenditures obligated by the contracting staff in the regional office, Division of Contracting and General Services. A particular accomplishment was contracting to construct a headquarters building for Savanna District, Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge, Savanna Illinois.

In the general services area, the Division analyzed our inventory of telephone equipment, facsimile machines and cell phones and replaced eight voice mail systems at various field stations with units that were Y2K compatible.

Mingo Job Corps During the last year, the Mingo Job Corps Center's (Center) ranking within the Department of Labor (DOL) improved from 98th in 1998 to 48th in 1999. That ranking reflects increases in the rate of students graduating from high school or getting the general education degree, completing their vocational training, and obtaining and retaining employment in their chosen vocation at a wage at or above the DOL standard. Some of these improvements can be attributed to the hiring of a new instructor for the clerical trade who modified the trade to be computer based and thus, resulted in the clerical trade going from being on probation for the two previous years to excelling in the rate of students completing the trade, and obtaining and retaining employment starting wage above the DOL standard. The Center's Fire Program has also excelled this year with assistance from the Center's students being requested for 20 fire assignments on U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Forest Service, State, and private lands for both wildfire suppression and prescribed burns.

Goals for Fiscal Year 2000

ABA General Goals **Customer Service:** Provide seamless administrative support to the field and Regional Office.

Streamlining: Continue to explore ways to improve and streamline the Regional administrative process.

Employees: Recruit, train, reward, and retain a quality workforce that reflects the diversity of this Nation's population.

Division-Specific Goals

Engineering and Safety

Resource Management. Complete planning and design for Refuge, Fisheries, and Job Corps resource management projects, identified and funded, in accordance with written criteria provided by the appropriate Programs.

Construction. Complete planning and design for construction funded projects, in accordance with criteria provided in approved Project Data Sheets (PDSs), and within agreed schedules.

Construction Management. Provide construction management and inspection services for all resource management and construction projects.

Facility Compliance. Conduct compliance audits and provide environmental compliance guidance to field stations and Regional Office program management.

Realignment. Continue efforts to adjust workload to meet changing project criteria. Look for opportunities to utilize outside sources to meet peak demands for drafting and construction management services.

Information. Provide managers with up-to-date electronic information to report station inspections, accident and injury statistics, water craft training, etc.

Technical Assistance. Assist supervisors, managers, and collateral safety officers so they can implement pro active safety programs.

Boat Operator's Training. Work with the Fisheries and Refuge Supervisors to meet the training requirements for boat operators.

Collateral Duty Safety Training. Work with OSHA to set up another training class for collateral duty safety personnel who have not taken the OSHA 600 class.

Personnel **Position Management.** Participate in the Service-wide Standard Position Description Project by identification and preparation of Standard PD's (Multi-Year Plan #4) for nation-wide use, in concert with client needs, and the addition of Regional SPD's to the Regional Web-site.

Employment. Participate in the Service-wide re-engineering of internal and external hiring processes based on merit using state of art technology. (Multi-Year Plan #1). Establish a revised temporary hiring program utilizing the STEP program as its base.

Employee Relations. Partner with Office of Diversity and Civil Rights in implementation of the Department of Interior CORE program for alternate dispute resolution. (Multi-Year Plan #2). Issue a Regional Employee Relations Web interface to the DOI Disciplinary Guide (HR Manager) to aid supervisors in documenting and taking disciplinary actions and otherwise dealing with conduct and performance actions.

Work Life Issues. Implement and expand Work-Life initiatives in concert with DOI, Service and Regional Management Team priorities. (Multi-year Plan #2).

Computer Support Group **Field Office Networks.** Upgrade field office networks and standalone computers for enhanced performance, and for transition to Lotus Notes.

Connectivity. Improve field office connectivity through implementation of new technological solutions.

Lotus Notes. Implement Lotus Notes in the Regional Office and for remote access. Transition the field networks to Notes.

Customer Service. Enhance user support customer service. Provide technical advice, policies, guidance, and instructions. Research and develop new technological solutions to improve and enhance performance of automated systems.

Finance **Federal Financial System.** Provide technical assistance to FFS users by filling a Regional FFS Coordinator position. Prepare an FFS training plan and manual for users, and conduct training, in an effort to bring all FFS users up-to-date on FFS policies and procedures. Provide formal training for new FFS users as needed, and for current FFS users as new procedures are implemented.

Improvements. Implement new systems, procedures, programs, policies or initiatives for the Budget Allocation System, Imprest Funds, collections, the Government Credit Card program, travel

(including Permanent Change of Station), and various other Finance or Budget related programs or initiatives.

**Contracting and
General Services**

Warrant Training. Provide warrant training for field personnel to meet their warrant update requirements.

Electronic Acquisition. Increase the use of Interior's Department Electronic Acquisition System (IDEAS).

Electronic Commerce. Implement electronic commerce in the Regional Office.

Realignment. Continue efforts to adjust workload to meet changing organizational structure and workload assignments.

Mingo Job Corps

Retention of Students. Retain students in the program for at least eight months or longer to ensure success in the Job Corps.

Employability. Ensure all areas are focused on employability of students and the quality factors of the DOL Assessment Guide.

School-to-Work. Strengthen the School-to-Work Process.

Placement. Place students in quality jobs and careers.

Staff. Recruit and retain a diverse work force of staff who have high expectation for themselves and the students.

Community Links. Strengthen community links.

Fiscal Year 1999 Accomplishments

Region's cc:Mail System Made Y2K-Compliant

Computer Support Group

Region 3's entire cc:Mail infrastructure was upgraded during Fiscal Year 1999 to ensure that Y2K compliant software was running at the post office and client levels. The project included the upgrade of five Regional Office and 45 field post offices to Version 8 of the cc:Mail database, as well as installing the Y2K-compliant version of the cc:Mail client on approximately 970 computers located in field and regional offices. Regional office upgrades were completed by members of the Region 3 Computer Support Group. Field office upgrades were primarily completed by locally-designated cc:Mail administrators, with the assistance of detailed instructions and a Compact Disk created by Computer Support Group staff. The disk contained all of the necessary software for the local administrator to complete the upgrade. This approach allowed Region 3 to complete the necessary Y2K-compliance upgrades with minimum travel by CSG staff or dependency on outside contractors. The process saved Region 3 an estimated \$20,000. The entire upgrade process was completed on schedule, and will benefit Region 3 and the Service by ensuring dependable cc:Mail services after January 1, 2000. The upgrade to Version 8 of the cc:Mail database also allows for 24-hour, Seven-day post office operation, with no downtime required for

routine database maintenance; that feature greatly increases post office accessibility, particularly at field offices.

6/30/99

New Employee Orientation/ Appointment Forms Now on the Web

Personnel

Employees new to Region 3 can now find most of the forms and brochures they need to orient themselves to Region 3 on the Worldwide Web. In the past, Personnel Office staff would need to manually create orientation "kits" containing all the forms and brochures required by new employees or employees transferring to the Region would need. Now all the forms and brochures (with the exception of the fingerprint chart) are available for download by the hiring station via the Region 3 Personnel Web Site. 7/30/99

Regional Office Computer Room Renovated

Computer Support Group

Extensive remodeling of the Regional 3 Regional Office Computer Room was completed during Fiscal Year 1999. The room was redesigning to allow for handicapped accessibility; air conditioning, fire suppression system, wire management, a cordless phone, new computer cabinets and workstation. The Computer Room is now a functional, protected environment for the important computer equipment of the Regional Office.

8/1/99

New IDEAS Server In- stalled; Speeds Data Entry

Computer Support Group

Region 3 Contracting and General Services Office uses the IDEAS program (Oracle-based) to enter procurement information. Originally, when IDEAS was implemented, Regional IDEAS users entered their information via TCP/IP to a server in Reston, Va., but the slow speed of data entry was unacceptable. In August 1999, the Washington CGS office purchased a Dell NT server to house the IDEAS program. The Computer Support Group assisted with installing the IDEAS server and mounting into a new rack and installed new workstation clients on 18 computers. The installation of the new server has greatly improved performance and users ability to enter procurement information. 8/1/99

Regional Office Network Servers Consolidated

Computer Support Group

The Region 3 Computer Support Group completed major tasks regarding topology and consolidation of Novell servers in the Regional Office during Fiscal Year 1999. To improve the speed and management of the network, the group changed the topology of the Regional Office from Token Ring to Ethernet. All Token Ring Cables were removed from the floor and replaced with Cat-5 Cabling. Approximately 150 Token Ring network cards were removed from Regional Office user's computer and new 3Com Ethernet network cards were

installed and configured. New racks and hubs were installed in the Computer Room. Documentation of the racks, hubs and cables has been done. Previously, there were five Novell 3.12 production servers that serviced the Regional Office, requiring eight network administrators. Two Compaq Proliant 3000 Servers were purchased and installed, each with Novell 4.11 software installed. One of these servers is the actual production server; the other is in standby mode in case the active server shuts down. Application software and user data files were transferred to the new server. There is one primary network administrator and one backup. The consolidation of the servers allows users to access their files from any workstation in the Regional Office and has reduced the administration of production servers. 8/1/99

Wide Area Network Connects Sherburne NWR, Bloomington (Ind.) and Twin Cities Field Office

Computer Support Group

A Wide Area Network (WAN) connection was established for Sherburne NWR, Bloomington ES Office, Twin Cities Field Office. This connection allows for much more reliable and faster access to service online applications, and saves all staff at these offices considerable time each week in doing their assigned duties. 9/9/99

Region 3 Prepares For Year 2000 Date Change

Computer Support Group

The Region 3 Computer Support Group worked with the Regional Office and field office staffs throughout Fiscal Year 1999 in preparation for the Year 2000 date change. Computer hardware, software and databases, as well as telecommunications equipment/systems and embedded chip equipment were inventoried. The Computer Support Group provided testing software, instructions, and up-to-date guidance to all field offices and completed all necessary work on regional office computers. Special national Year 2000 funds were distributed to field offices to purchase equipment and software to replace non-compliant systems.

9/30/99

Region 3 Computer Support Group Web Site Helps Users Solve Problems

Computer Support Group

The Region 3 Computer Support Group has worked together to produce and maintain a web site to enhance support services provided to Region 3 computer users and managers. Numerous resources are available at the site to help users resolve problems, suggest improvements, and keep users and managers informed of policies, guidance, and current and future technology initiatives in Region 3. The Web site is located at URL: r3ftp.fws.gov/csg 9/30/99